

AGIA Workforce Development Investments FY 2009 and Projected for 2010.
October 22, 2009

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development is continuing a major effort to implement the Alaska Gasline Inducement Act (AGIA) Strategic Training Plan.

The plan's overall purpose is to bring Alaska into a new era of collaboration and innovation among educators and training providers, combined with strategic investments in connected, regionally delivered and accredited programs to create world-class training and educational systems for Alaska. The plan, developed and regularly monitored by a public/private steering committee, is guiding the department and Alaska Workforce Investment Board in workforce policy development and in the allocation of funds to training activities.

The Plan identifies four broad strategies to prepare Alaskans for 113 occupations necessary for gas line construction:

1. increase awareness of and access to career opportunities in natural resource development,
2. develop a comprehensive, integrated career and technical education system that aligns training institutions and coordinates program delivery,
3. increase opportunities for registered apprenticeship in skilled occupations and expand other structured training opportunities, and
4. increase opportunities for development of appropriate training programs for operations, technical, and management workers.

State and federal funding has been appropriated toward implementation of these strategies. In FY 10, the following activities are underway:

Strategy 1: Increase Awareness of and Access to Careers

Awareness activities include investments in the Alaska Construction Academy model around the state to introduce youth and dislocated adult workers to basic construction skills; funding for school-based career guides who provide career planning services and job referral to secondary students; improvements to the Alaska Career Information System and other department web-based resources to provide career planning tools and to connect students with Alaska-based training programs. The Department has also sponsored secondary teacher externships and summer construction and engineering academies to expand teacher and student awareness of gas line related careers.

1. In FY09, the Alaska Construction Academy trained 1,645 youth and 416 adults in a variety of gas line occupations.

2. Last year the Alaska Youth First Program delivered awareness activities through career guides to 18,976 Alaskan youths.
3. In addition, the Teacher Industry Externships (TIE) program aligns with the AGIA Training Plan by increasing the awareness of and access to career opportunities in natural resource development. As many as 2,000 students in school are affected by participating teachers each year. Last year the Alaska Process Industry Careers Consortium had seven teachers who participated in AGIA related industry through externships. These teachers are then able to give their students first hand information about the possible types of careers in this industry as well as the types of skills needed.
4. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds were awarded to the Department of Transportation for their “Think Apprenticeship” awareness campaign. This campaign seeks to bring more Alaskan youth to the Heavy Highway and Construction industries as well encourage employers to hire registered apprentices. The transferable skills from the construction industry will help prepare Alaskans to build the Alaska Gasline.
5. The Employment Security Division (ESD) recently completed enhancements to Alaska’s Skills Based Job Bank (ALEXsys) which allows job seekers to enter their credentials as part of their on-line resumes. This feature allows the department to better match job seekers’ skills and experiences to employers’ job requirements. The credentialing feature also allows the department to track individuals by specific credentials, allowing the ability to determine job seeker employment and training needs. Credentials include professional licenses, certifications, endorsements, diplomas, and the Alaska Career Ready Certificate. The ability to search by degree types, certificates, and trades continues to be a critical component in our commitment to prepare Alaskans for jobs needed for the Alaska Gas Pipeline.
6. Another enhancement to ALEXsys is variable reporting enables the ESD staff to create ad hoc reports to better manage resources. Recently, this function allowed us to contact job seekers with specific skills in priority industries to advise them of training opportunities. This outreach resulted in seven individuals attending diesel mechanic training and 15 individuals attending underground mining training. Both are AGIA related occupations.
7. The Alaska Vocational Technical has significantly increased efforts to reach high school students across Alaska through visits to 200 schools and career fair attendance in the last two years. As a result AVTEC’s average student age is now 25 and in the last two years AVTEC has trained over 250 youth ages 17 – 21 in gasline related occupations. With a 94% job placement rate, over 235 Alaskans age 17 – 21 have entered gasline related occupations in the last two years.

Strategy 2: Aligned Career and Technical Education System

The department has coordinated several meetings between training providers in the state, including the University of Alaska, the Alaska Vocational Technical Center and regional training centers, to better align and articulate training programs. The department is also working

closely with the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development toward developing a template for career plans to be completed by all high school students, establishing and implementing standards for Alaska training programs, supporting the use of the Alaska Career Ready certificate, and communications and outreach with secondary and postsecondary educators and administrators throughout the state.

Specific activities include:

1. More than 900 Alaskan youth participated in summer work experience with a focus on developing basic work skills. Pre and post test applied via the KeyTrains, Career Ready 101 which includes an on-line assessment of work skills.
2. Twelve Career Guides located in schools and communities around Alaska are providing career and job training information to students in and out of school about Alaska career opportunities.
3. Alaska Vocational Technical Center is assisting twelve Regional Training Centers to establish outreach, recruitment, and enrollment standards and basic skills assessment to increase the number of rural residents enrolling in gasline construction related technical training programs and/or apprenticeship.

Strategy 3: Expand Registered Apprenticeship and Structured Training

The Department made a commitment to apprenticeship training by reaching out to not only the industries that have traditionally used the apprenticeship model for workers in the skilled trades – such as construction – but to other high-demand industries in Alaska including health care, manufacturing and retail trade. DOLWD's Apprenticeship Coordinator has been working in concert with the U.S. Bureau of Apprenticeship's Alaska office toward increasing awareness of the benefits of registered apprenticeship and to increase the number and scope of apprentice opportunities in the state.

Specific successes include:

1. Through a collaborative effort with the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment Training Administration's Office of Apprenticeship, the University of Alaska's Mining and Petroleum Training Service (MAPTS), the mining industry, and the Department, a first-of-its-kind apprenticeship program for geophysical core drilling is established, setting the standard not only for the state, but also for the nation. The geophysical core driller training was conducted in Kotzebue and Bethel with 37 graduates becoming first-year apprentices. This program is helping rural Alaskans get training and then high paying jobs in their regions.
2. Developing a partnership with Raven Electric in Anchorage to deliver electrical apprenticeship related instruction in Anchorage. 14 new apprentices were enrolled last year.

3. Expansion of the Fairbanks Pipeline Training Center to increase the number of training opportunities for incumbent and entry-level apprentices. More than 100 apprentices participated in training last year and will do so again in November of 2009.
4. The Department conducted its second annual apprenticeship conference, “Building Alaska’s Future,” in Anchorage on April 30, 2009. The conference attracted employers interested in how apprenticeship works, and educators wanting to explore the integration of apprenticeship in the educational system.
5. The Department’s Employment Security Division (ESD), the state’s designated One-Stop Operator, has 10 statewide registered apprenticeship specialists engaging employers on a consistent basis and working hand in hand with Career Support and Training Service case managers on wage-incentives and Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and supportive services.
6. Ongoing ESD activity includes: funding ITA course related instruction and supportive services for the Alaska Pipeline Worker Training Project (APWTP) grant participants as required by apprenticeship sponsors, to support an apprentice’s successful completion of a registered apprenticeship program; compensating employers through on the job training agreements; and providing support services including Alaska Career Ready testing, certification and registration of certificates.
7. A surveyor apprentice training was held by Tanana Chiefs Conference with support from the Teamsters Union. Twelve participants successfully completed the training course and eleven obtained work with local companies.

Strategy 4: Increase Training Opportunities

Significant investments have been made at the state and federal levels toward gas line related job training, including:

1. The University of Alaska has expanded its engineering program to double the number of engineering graduates.
2. The State Training and Employment Program provided over \$3 million in training support for a variety of gas line occupations to 1570 adults.
3. A federal pipeline-training grant is being used by the Galena City School District to train rural Aircraft Dispatchers, skills that can be transferred to transportation and logistical support for pipeline construction.
4. Alaska Works - annual Cross-country Pipeline Training Orientation, Environmental, Health and Safety Certification, Pre-pipeline and entry level training for younger workers in rural Alaska, and Train the Trainer instructional classes and support.
5. Tanana Valley Campus - Heavy Equipment and Diesel Mechanic training and apprenticeship support.

6. University of Alaska – Statewide Campuses for Interior Career Academies, Math and Sports Camp at University of Fairbanks campus and Alaska Summer Research Academy with a focus on science, robotics, engineering, and math.
7. University of Alaska – Southeast, to begin the first phase of a multi-phase project to develop a curriculum and deliver related technical instruction for first and second year registered apprentices in the occupation of Bus, Truck Mechanic and Diesel Engine Specialist.
8. Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center (NACTEC) in Nome conducted entry level pre-employment academic activities focused on improving fundamental math or reading comprehension and related career exploration activities including introduction to welding, engine repair, driver education, emergency medical technician, food preparation, and carpentry.
9. Alaska Vocational Technical Education Center (AVTEC) – Provided GED and academic learning support, pre-pipeline training and support for academic preparedness through distance training at Regional Training Centers.
10. Regional Training Centers – Sitka Works, NACTEC, and Galena are engaged in an effort to integrate vocational and technical education and to support academic basic education in rural Alaska.
11. Employment Security Division - Support recruitment of Alaskans through Job Centers into training and employment in pipeline related occupations.

The Alaska Gasline Inducement Act includes a provision encouraging the licensee to hire to the maximum extent possible Alaskans for the Alaska portion of the project. The department has begun discussions with the APP on a formal and regular employment reporting mechanism.